



ONEIDA COUNTY OFFICE OF THE COUNTY EXECUTIVE

ANTHONY J. PICENTE, JR.
County Executive
ce@oneidacountyny.gov

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The Honorable Kathy Hochul
Governor of the State of New York
NYS Capitol Building
Albany, NY 12224

Governor Hochul:

The residents of Oneida County are experiencing unprecedented hardship due to the skyrocketing utility bills of which your administration is the architect.

Winter electricity bills are already two to three times higher for many households than just a few years ago. This surge in cost is placing an extraordinary burden on working families, seniors on fixed incomes and small businesses that are already struggling with inflation and economic uncertainty. Many families are forced to choose between necessities such as food and medicine in order to pay their utility bills. This is an issue for every New York State resident regardless of the utility that services their area.

These increases also continue to highlight how misguided the State's energy priorities are thanks to the cumulative impact of public policies that have emphasized rapid, forced electrification without ensuring the proper infrastructure, transmission capacity or affordability protections necessary to support such an aggressive transition. New Yorkers are now paying the price, literally, for a system that is not yet equipped to handle the demands being placed on it.

As governor, it is your role to lead this state and reverse your course because your actions have created a undue burden placed on your residents. Only 40 percent of electricity bills are the power itself. The remaining cost is due to delivery and state mandated charges. That paints a very clear picture. You, and you alone, can bring instant relief if you would take immediate and decisive action.

You have the financial wherewithal to act. New York has over \$2 billion cash on hand and in addition has an additional \$1 billion collected through a system benefit charge which residents have already paid into and would bring true relief. Other states are taking these types of actions for their residents.

You continue to preach affordability and yet here you are faced with a problem you created that is placing financial pressure on every single New Yorker. Is affordability as important to you as you say? If so, I implore you to take the following actions immediately:

1. Deploy the \$1.6 billion in NYSERDA system benefit charge funds to provide immediate, direct relief to middle-income families and seniors.
2. Increase the income eligibility thresholds so that more families and seniors qualify for Emergency HEAP assistance.
3. Authorize a second Emergency HEAP benefit to support households facing utility shutoffs or untenable arrears.
4. Direct the Public Service Commission to revisit and reconsider recent National Grid rate increases in light of these extreme spikes.
5. Use any and all additional tools, programs, and discretionary funds available to your office to provide both immediate and long-term relief.

You have the power to reverse this ill-fated course. Take these corrective actions now.

Respectfully,



Anthony J. Picente Jr.
County Executive